

14 million young Americans no longer in college and not covered by their own employment insurance, not eligible for their parents' coverage. They are going to have coverage under this plan.

Only 6 months after the enactment of this bill, insurers will be required to permit children to stay on family policies until age 26, in the year 2010. So when the Senator from Tennessee says nothing happens until 2014 except collecting taxes, he is mistaken. That happens. It happens immediately.

Free prevention services are going to be available as well—prevention services that will help a lot of people avoid serious illness. Today, many Americans pay 20 percent of the cost of many preventive services. Millions have no access to them at all. The Senate bill will require coverage of prevention and wellness benefits. For seniors, the Senate bill is going to provide free annual wellness checkups, immediately.

There is insurance reform as well. The Senator from Tennessee keeps overlooking this, and he shouldn't. One of the biggest ripoffs for American consumers are health insurance companies that turn you down because of pre-existing conditions and a variety of other reasons they find not to cover you. This Senate bill will give Americans the opportunity to focus on healthy living, will put patients first. It will eliminate abuses by insurance companies. It immediately bans rescissions, the practice where health insurance companies cancel your policy. Six months after enactment in 2010, insurers are prohibited from imposing lifetime limits on benefits. These are immediate benefits.

We know what the Republican playbook is because they gave it to us—maybe not intentionally. But early on, 8 months ago, the Republican strategist Frank Luntz sent out a memo before the bill was even written and said: Here is how we can defeat health care reform. That suggests to me there was never a good-faith effort at the top in the Republican Party to even consider health care reform. Frank Luntz went through all the things to defeat health care reform even before the bill was introduced, talking about rationing and denial and talking about government programs and so forth and so on—buzz words. Then, the current inspiration of the Republican National Party, Michael Steele, the Republican National Committee chairman, a man I am sure the Senator from Tennessee holds in the highest esteem, recently shared with us the following in a memo. Chairman Steele wrote:

I urge everyone to spend every bit of capital and energy you have to stop this health care reform. The Democrats have accused us of trying to delay, stall, slow down, and stop this bill. They are right.

Chairman Steele says, his words: "Delay, stall, slow down, and stop." And for 8 months that has been the Republican strategy.

Unfortunately, that strategy now applies to the Department of Defense ap-

propriations bill which we will vote on this morning. One hundred Senators will trek through the snow and come in early this morning to vote on a bill which we should all support unanimously. They will try parliamentary efforts to stop the bill, derail the bill, even though the continuing resolution expired last night.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. I hope we can gather enough bipartisan support for our troops this morning, have a cup of coffee, and go home to our families soon to celebrate the holiday season.

I reserve the remainder of my time and yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that 5 of the 10 minutes I have been reserved for the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. President, I withdraw that request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I will be using some of the leader's time, and if the leader decides to step in, all he has to do is signal.

I wish to, first of all, say how much I appreciate the leader, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader for the heroic efforts he has made in the last few weeks to try to assure that the American people know what is in the bill that will be put before us very soon. Now, I say put before us very soon because we don't know what the substitute bill is that has been worked on for the last few days. We haven't seen it yet. I think that brings up an important point.

I am hoping the distinguished majority leader, who is also on the floor, will allow America, as well as Senators certainly, to see the managers' amendment which includes all of the changes in the bill that is before us before we are forced to vote on this monumental piece of legislation.

When I am talking to my constituents back home, my friends, the people who just come up to me on an airplane, they say: What are you doing? Why is this being rushed through when it is one-sixth of our economy, when it is quality of life for every American, when we are talking about jobs in the private sector that will be sacrificed for a big government takeover, more government jobs, fewer private sector jobs. People are saying: What are you doing?

When I was talking about the taxes that are going to take effect in 2 weeks, before the bill takes effect 4 years from now, people were surprised. Even very informed people who read all the major newspapers, they said: What? The taxes are going to take effect 4 years before the bill takes effect? I mean, what are you all doing? Has Congress ever done that before?

I couldn't remember a time when Congress would pass taxes for 4 years, purporting to put together a new pro-

gram, and then all of a sudden, after 4 years, the program would start but the taxes have accumulated, and it is going to be \$75 billion that will have accumulated before any implementation of the bill that is before us.

So I have heard the criticism on the floor that Republicans are trying to slow this down, that they are trying to stop this bill. It is very important that this health care bill be slowed down so that not only the Senate but the people of America can look at this and determine how it affects them personally, so they can look at what the proposed options are going to be. They can look at the taxes. They can look at the mandates. They can look at the small business requirements that could actually cost jobs.

Now, one might say: Well, if it costs a few jobs, maybe there is a greater good. We are in the toughest recession we have been in since the 1940s, since World War II. We are in the toughest recession we have been in, and here we are maybe stopping job increases or maybe adding to the unemployment figures which are the highest in 40 years in our country.

So I know the American people are saying: Why? Why push this through? Why push it through so fast when we are talking about maybe losing jobs in an economic downturn, when people are already hurting. Even the people who are employed are afraid that maybe they are going to be laid off because times seem to be getting tougher out there. We hear that the buying season, the Christmas season, is not going as well as retailers have come to expect to try to make their yearly requirements to make their profits.

What does that mean? If we do not make those profits, then people are not buying and people are not going to be hired and maybe people are going to be laid off.

I do not think this is the time to be talking about losing jobs, something that is going to increase the burden and the mandate and the taxes on our business.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I strongly support the Defense appropriations conference report for 2010, H.R. 3326. This bill provides funding for our troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senators INOUE and COCHRAN, as well as other committee members, for their efforts to develop this vital legislation.

This bill keeps our commitments to our troops and military families. The bill provides a 3.4-percent military pay raise, \$29.2 billion for the Defense Health Program, including \$120 million for traumatic brain injury and psychological health research. The measure also includes \$472 million for family advocacy programs which include quality childcare, job training for spouses, and expanded counseling for families experiencing stress due to deployments.